

Caring for an azalea indoors

The foundation for many weeks of enjoyment from an azalea in the living room, office or other room is laid when you first purchase the plant. Make sure that all the buds are developing evenly and are already showing colour; if a few flowers are open, that is a plus. The leaves must be fresh and lively.

An azalea does best at room temperature (20-25°C); at higher temperatures the flowering period is shortened, at lower temperatures the flowering period is extended. Once you have purchased an azalea or received one as a gift, the question arises: "How much water does the azalea need?" The answer is quite simple: the soil must always feel as wet as a wrung-out mop. If the azalea is in a plastic pot, the weight is a good indicator.

In the wild, azaleas can be found in Japan and China, mostly in areas where it rains a lot. They grow on mountainsides with very good drainage, which is an important fact to know: if our indoor azalea is placed in a pot, any water that collects at the bottom of the pot will be sucked up by the soil, thus depriving the roots of their much needed oxygen. This is the worst thing that could happen to the azalea! Always check the pot for standing water.

Keeping an azalea alive

Since azaleas are woody shrubs with a long lifespan, keeping an azalea alive for many years is possible, but difficult: after flowering, the wilted blooms should be deadheaded and the azalea should be placed in a cool, frost-free, light room and watered in accordance with the guidelines above.

Around May 15 you can plant the azalea outside in well-draining soil, preferably in a partially shaded area. During the summer months, it should be watered liberally and fertilised moderately with a slow-acting fertiliser (NPK ratio 3 - 1 - 2). As soon as there is a risk of frost (mid-October), bring the azalea back indoors and place it in a cool, light location (e.g. veranda).

If the pot is now too small, you must re-pot the plant in a pot that is 2 to 4 cm wider than the original one, making sure you use a well-aerated acidophilous soil.

**Did you know that in its country of origin,
giving an azalea is thought
to bring good luck!**

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.